

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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DOUBLEDAY'S CHILDREN.

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BOOK II. THE CONFESSION OF DORIS.

CHAPTER XV. WHAT CATALINA SAID.

I HOPE I have done justice to the manner of Mr. Leveridge's love-making. I have endeavoured to report exactly the words he spoke. It is a proof of his skill, or of his success, that I forgot for the moment his age, and his very plain looks; I would even have loved him if I could. I was grateful to him for his love; I entertained a sincere respect for him. Yet I should certainly have respected him more if he had loved me less. For his love perplexed me; I knew how little I really merited it.

And now, I was to be reminded at every turn of the fact of my engagement. The servants knew it. I could read their knowledge in their faces. They smirked and smiled upon me effusively, treated me to lower curtsies, and seemed to find pleasure in gazing at me. Behind my back, I have no doubt they ridiculed me considerably; while Mr. Leveridge, in his character of accepted lover, probably afforded them infinite amusement. And no doubt, with his elated air, his tripping gait, his frequent visits, his great good-humour, he did lay himself rather open to ridicule.

Miss Leveridge—in her agitated, infirm way—was most reverential to me, and, after a fashion, sympathetic with me. She did not like me, I was well assured of that; but she thoroughly recognised that I was to be her brother's wife—that I was to occupy thenceforward the most pro-

minent place in his thoughts and affections. She sighed as she reflected upon the fact, and muttered compassionately concerning "poor Dick." Nevertheless, she viewed him as one of those proverbial wilful men, to whom it is advisable to permit their own way. If he could not be happy without me—well, it was best that he should obtain me. He was, in her eyes, as a child crying for a toy—I was the toy to be given him to quiet him. I was a very subordinate consideration in the matter: a mere chattel, in fact. Yet probably Miss Leveridge held that altogether I was very much to be envied; I had come in for so large a share of good fortune in winning the hand, and heart, and wealth of "poor Dick."

Let me admit, however, that it was perfectly natural, and even right, for Miss Leveridge—touching this question of his marriage—to think more of her brother's happiness than of mine. After all he was her brother—I was an absolute stranger. And certainly I had done little in the way of conciliating or comforting her, or earning her good opinion. And I did not really blame her because of her little regard of me; except sometimes, when I was in the mood to blame everybody—including myself.

"Try and make poor Dick happy, my dear. Be a good wife to him, for indeed, indeed, you'll have the best of husbands. And we shall be sisters-in-law, and you must learn to call me Deborah. Dear me, how many chances and changes there are in this life!"

And thereupon Miss Leveridge plied her knitting-needles with extraordinary energy, and purchased an enormous supply of wool. She was bent upon completing,

as a wedding-present to her brother, an expansive piece of work, of the counterpane sort, brilliant of colour and very neat and close of execution. I forget how many pounds it was to weigh. For some time it completely engrossed the attention of Miss Leveridge.

Catalina came to see me. Somehow her presence was not welcome to me. I assumed that her visit was one of congratulation; although, in truth, I had not informed her, or anyone, concerning my engagement—I had not even addressed a word to Nick or Basil upon the subject. I was pledged to be married almost in spite of myself. They would learn the fact in good time—if later rather than sooner, what did it matter? I was faithful to my plan, or my no-plan, of apathy—of drifting on, without stir on my part, whither chance might direct.

And of late Catalina had been less dear to me than once she had seemed to be. She was a rebuke to me—for I recognised the superiority of her nature. I felt myself capable of things, of which I believed her incapable. I mean things of rather an unworthy sort. Then she was very beautiful; not that I was therefore jealous of her—although, perhaps, in another respect, I was accountable for such a sin.

"It is true, then?" she said.

I suppose my face betrayed my embarrassment—perhaps a certain sense of shame. Assuredly I was not proud of my engagement—I had, indeed, little reason to be proud of it.

"Well, yes, it's true," I answered, trying to meet her firm, bright gaze—and failing—and then blushing; and then hating myself for my lack of self-control and courage.

"Dearest, I do trust it may be for your happiness."

"Indeed, I trust so too. But one can't be quite sure about it."

My tone was heedlessly tart and flip-pant, I daresay. I could see an expression of disappointment, or even pain, flit across Lina's forehead. To be just, I thought I had never seen her look so beautiful. Her eyes beamed most tenderly upon me; there was something so good, and sweet, and pure, in her face.

"Let us sit down," she said. "I thought to say some formal words of compliment, Doris—but though the time has come for them, somehow I don't feel that I can say them."

"I don't want compliments, Lina, or congratulations."

"Are you sure that you are doing right, Doris?"

"Is it worth while to ask that now? It is done, now; I suppose so, at any rate. How did you hear of it, Lina?"

"From M. Riel."

"And he learnt it——?"

"From Mr. Leveridge. He is very happy, it appears; and he does not—perhaps he cannot—conceal the fact of his happiness. He speaks of it to all about him. He mentioned it to M. Riel."

"And he told you again; I see. He expressed disapproval, regret, surprise?"

"No. He simply spoke to us of the fact."

"He made no comment?"

"He made no comment. Why should he?"

"Why, indeed? It was no business of his. And yet, Lina, I think he might have said something."

"What should he have said?"

"That I can't tell you. Did he speak of Mr. Leveridge?"

"Yes. But he did not say very much. Something about his future plans, I remember. For one thing, that he was engaged upon a new work of great importance."

"Indeed? I have not heard of it."

"Yes; and he mentioned the subject. From his account, Mr. Leveridge set great store upon it. But I confess I don't understand these mythological pictures; and therefore, no doubt, I cannot value them properly."

"What was the subject?"

"As M. Riel described it to us, it was—The Marriage of Vulcan and Venus."

She spoke with perfect simplicity and sincerity; of that I was fully convinced. She had no suspicion that something of insult was intended in this reference to an imaginary picture. For, of course—only she had not the wit to perceive it—Mr. Leveridge was engaged upon no such work as that M. Riel had described. Only a sort of bantering allusion was designed to the projected marriage between Mr. Leveridge and myself.

It was with difficulty I could hold my peace. I nearly bit my tongue through in my effort to keep silent. For, indeed, I longed to speak—to express myself very freely. I felt insulted—grievously offended. What right had M. Riel to speak of me thus? To make me the

subject of a hard, rude, heartless jest? Surely I had deserved better treatment at his hands. For the moment I hated him.

I scanned her face very closely. No; it was clear she was innocent of all intention to affront me—she was not M. Riel's accomplice.

"Your hands burn, and your cheeks flush, and then pale again as suddenly. Are you ill, Doris? Can I help you in any way?"

"In no way, Lina."

"Dearest, I must say again that I trust what you have done may be for your own happiness."

"You say that because you doubt."

"And I have no right to doubt or to question. We are not quite such close friends as once we were, Doris. You have withdrawn your confidence from me. Indeed I fear that you have hardened your heart against me; yet, Doris, be sure that you are very dear to me. If I might speak frankly to you!"

"You may, Lina, if you will."

I was moved by the sympathetic tone of her voice.

"But would it be right to speak? That is the question. Doris, I must speak; I will speak. Why do you marry Mr. Leveridge? I had pictured your marrying such a very different husband."

"One who was young and handsome?"

"Yes; young and very handsome."

"And rich?"

"I never thought about his being rich. Does that matter so very much? Poverty is not so grave a thing. One can be happy in spite of it. We—I mean my grandfather, and old Uncle Junius, and myself—we have always been poor, very poor; yet we have been happy too—very happy sometimes."

"I hate poverty! I dread poverty! I have not your courage, Lina; I cannot bear misfortune with so light a heart. I am a coward, especially on this subject of poverty. Mr. Leveridge is rich. Does not that explain it all to you, Lina?"

"No. Because it is unlike you to be doing this thing. You are not really a coward; you but fancy yourself one. It is not for that you have stooped—for it is stooping, to marry Mr. Leveridge. Pardon me, I should not have said that."

"No; for it is he that has stooped, Lina. But tell me—this young and handsome husband you spoke of just now—he exists but in your fancy? It was no real living person you were thinking of?"

"No," she answered, laughing. "It was but a picture of the possible or impossible perfect husband, that girls dream of for their beautiful girl friends; and for themselves, too, perhaps. I do not know any such person really."

It seemed clear that she could not have been thinking of M. Riel, as I had suspected in the first instance.

"You will come and see me after I am married, Lina?"

"Certainly, I will come, if I may. But, I can't quite believe it yet. It takes my breath away. Perhaps, by-and-by, it will not seem so strange a thing to me—I may even persuade myself that it is wise and right for you to marry Mr. Leveridge."

"Think as well as you can of me, Lina. Don't despise me for what I am about to do."

"There is no fear of my despising you, Doris."

"It is wise and right, Lina, or very nearly so. Mr. Leveridge loves me."

"I can well believe it."

"And I owe him so much. He has been so very kind to me—and to my brothers. He begs of me my hand. He has almost a right to demand it. Could I refuse him after all he has done for us?"

"It is hard to say. And yet—I feel that he should not be your husband."

"Because he is old and ugly?"

"Well, yes—to be frank—in a great measure because he is old and ugly."

"Is it fair to him to dwell so much upon that?"

"Perhaps not; but in these cases we can't always be quite fair. Prejudice, and sentiment, and romance tilt the scales, and destroy the balance."

"But bring common sense to bear upon the question. I weary of my present life. I am nothing. I can do nothing. I look forward to nothing. If I cannot give my love to Mr. Leveridge, at any rate I have given it to no other."

"You are sure?"

"I am very sure. Perhaps I have no love to give to anyone. Perhaps I can love no one. But I do want to help my brothers."

"That seems a good motive. But would they consent to the sacrifice? For it is a sacrifice."

"Their consent has not been asked; nor do I want to excuse my conduct upon high grounds. I am selfish. I have considered my own interests. They commend to me this marriage with Mr. Leveridge."

"I am not competent to discuss the question, Doris. I know that I am apt to decide by feeling, rather than by reason. You will forgive me, if I have spoken too plainly. I do wish this marriage was not to be. But, since I learn it must be so, dearest, I hope and pray it may be for the best."

She kissed me affectionately, and it seemed to be agreed between us that upon that occasion, at any rate, little more should be said in relation to my engagement. I showed her my ring, which she greatly admired, avowing it to be the most beautiful she had ever seen.

"Some day, Lina, a ring very like that will be slipped on your own slim third finger."

"That is not probable," she said, with a faint blush. "If lovers come to me—and they may not come at all—they will be poor, I think; they will not be able to afford such gifts as this."

"But a rich suitor may appear, determined to win you."

"He will fail. I shall never marry, I think—certainly not a rich suitor."

"You will love, and you will be loved."

"It may be so," she said, musingly.

"But, sometimes, it seems to me that life is too serious and too sad, for love to take part in it. Yet love is a serious thing, too. At least, we should think of it seriously, should we not? You see I know a little of the subject of which I venture to speak. I have read of love in books, of course; I have read love-stories, and the many beautiful things the poets have written upon love. Yet I never feel that they have described anything of which my own heart has knowledge and experience. Can one love and not know it, do you think?"

"I think it possible. It is hard to be sure always of one's own sentiments."

"We may fancy we love and yet not really love; or we may fancy we do not love, the while we are really loving very much indeed. What tricks our fancy may play us! I am not speaking, of course, of the love I feel for my grandfather and for poor Uncle Junius. That is affection or devotion, a very genuine and precious thing, but different to what people mean generally when they speak of love and friendship. I think that may be even worthier and nobler than love, although the world does not judge so. Yet what would the world be without affection and friendship—the love of child for parent and of parent for child, the

deep and earnest attachment of friend to friend?"

"You will count me your friend still, Lina?"

"Surely I will—you and your brothers, Nick and Basil. We are all old and fast friends."

"And M. Riel?"

"He is scarcely a friend of mine. I know him, of course, and see him frequently; but he is rather my grandfather's friend than mine."

"But if he loves you?"

"He? Impossible! It cannot be. Why do you say such a thing?"

"It would not be so very strange. You are very beautiful, Lina."

"He is more likely to love you than me, if beauty is to be the excuse for his love."

"Well, it is certain that he does not love me," I said.

Catalina was silent.

"But Nick and Basil; they love you, Lina," I resumed presently.

"They love in jest," she said, smiling, "as men fence—with buttons on their foils. There is no danger in either case."

"You answer for yourself; you cannot answer for them."

She did not reply to this, but looked rather thoughtful; and presently we parted. I liked her, and I knew she meant kindly; yet I could not be assured that I thoroughly understood her. That I had forfeited, by the fact of my engagement, something of her good opinion was hardly to be questioned. I could not be surprised at this; for, indeed, I had made sacrifice of my own good opinion of myself.

PORTRAITS WORKED IN TAPESTRY.

II. THE LAST OF THE VALOIS.

ON the banks of the Loire. The bright river gleaming in the sunshine, and rolling through the arches of the ancient bridge—over which frowns the great castle of Amboise—not yet deformed by the builders of Louis the Great, but rejoicing in a wealth of architectural beauty; the stern Norman features of the stronghold throwing into relief the florid richness of the Renaissance. As the sun descends, steeping the lofty castellated rock in crimson and purple—at the close of this glorious July day of the year of grace 1559—the little bright-eyed, black-haired girl, gorgeously dight in a dress stiff with gold and pearls, knows little of the terrible event which has left her

to be the plaything and the tool, by turns the prey and the lure, of Catholic and Huguenot, of mother, and brother, and husband. Her father, the great King Henry the Second—name forgotten since, were it not for a certain beautiful kind of pottery—has fallen a victim to the luckless lance of Montgomery; and France is left in the weak grasp of a gentle, smooth-faced lad known to historians as Francis the Second, and celebrated, poor boy! for nothing save as having been the first husband of Mary Stuart. The little girl at Amboise has been a pet of her handsome, sad-looking father, and of her long-headed mother, Catherine de' Medici. In the old happy days of triumph, while the victories of Metz and Calais, and successes in Italy made the French king deem himself a thunderbolt of war, Henry oftentimes dandled his daughter on his knee, and asked her why she preferred of her little playmates the youthful Guise to the bonnier Beaupreau—a question fully answered in later and sadder days. Unluckily for the little girl, she is pretty, and, luckily or unluckily, is clever. Fated to be the last of the intellectual race of Valois, she is second to none of them in the accomplishments of the time. Skilful instructors are opening her mind to the literary masterpieces of antiquity. Unhappily, her school, if brilliant, is far from pure. The taste of the court of Catherine de' Medici is formed on the model of M. de Ronsard, whose ditties are over-much given to the passion of love. A change comes over France as the little girl grows upward. The writings of the rollicking author of *Pantagruel*, and the bitter satires of the friends of Ronsard, have raised a storm soon to break in a crimson shower. Persecuting François, gloomy Henry, and poor little François the Second are gone, and under the rule of the livid, hectic youth, Charles the Ninth, with his smooth face and snaky look, the "taint of Huguenotry" has spread far and wide. Little Marguerite, who has been brought up "bonne Catholique," undergoes all kinds of persecutions at the hands of her brother, the Duc d'Alençon, who, "infected" with Protestantism, burns her old-fashioned books, and leads his poor little sister a dreadful life. The court of France is really playing a double game, the queen-mother being the reigning spirit. On the one hand is orthodoxy—and the whole power of the House of Lorraine—hateful to the Valois. Against orthodoxy and the Guises skilful

Catherine covertly encourages the chiefs of the Huguenots, aiming to secure by this Machiavelian policy the predominance of the Crown—not to be accomplished till three-quarters of a century later by the genius of Richelieu.

Little Marguerite grows apace in these troublous times, increasing in beauty and the consciousness thereof. Long before there is any question of marrying her, there are rumours that she has faithful servitors—lordlings who wear her colours, and enjoy the reputation of possessing her affections. First among these shines, in all the bravery of court favour, the handsome Balzac d'Entraignes—the "bel Antraguët"—dainty minion of Marguerite's brother, the Duc d'Anjou—a slender, graceful man, with delicate, well-cut features of quiet, concentrated expression; one of those self-contained men, full of courage, vice, and intrigue, who have left their names in letters of blood on the page of the Renaissance; a dandy, too, of the first water, shaved and curled, perfumed and essenced, till he sheds an aroma of gallantry around him—a dangerous admirer for a young princess of volcanic tendencies. But his web is soon spun, as he, with Quélus and others of the same type, follows his master to the kingdom of Poland. The reception of the Polish ambassadors is made the occasion of a brilliant fête, at which, of course, Marguerite is present in a wondrous dress of velvet incarnadine glittering with spangles, blazing with precious stones; her head—already decked, alas! for vanity—in one of the "dainty blonde wigs" that she loved to her dying day. The raven locks are hidden, and the hazel eyes shine out under a remarkable head-dress, also of crimson velvet, decked with feathers, diamonds, and pearls. A very beauteous Marguerite indeed, and soon furnished with a new lover—no other than her early playmate, the Duc de Guise—the dark-visaged, scarred one; the famous soldier who, when threatened, said proudly, "They dare not!" A well-matched couple this, "le Balafre" being anxious to wed a daughter of France. Guise, backed by the whole power of the papacy, is strong enough to break off the projected marriage between Marguerite and the King of Portugal, but is forced to bend to the policy of the queen-mother. Catherine will not see the hated house of Lorraine, already, to her mind, far too strong, strengthened yet more by another

alliance with a daughter of France. It may not be; and the handsome lovers are advised that their destiny is different. The scarred one, terrified by the menaces of the king, marries at once a handsome widow—the Princess de Porcian—who gives him no little trouble as time rolls on. Hapless Marguerite, like another, but by no means spotless, Iphigenia, is destined for another fate—foreshadowed at a famous meeting on the confines of France and Spain.

Never was a fête more brilliant than this held to celebrate the interview between Queen Elizabeth, consort of Philip the Second, her mother, Catherine, and her brother, Charles the Ninth. The island of Aiguemeau on the Adour has been metamorphosed into a fairy palace, surrounded by lofty trees, under which lurk snug parties of ten or a dozen, the royal table at one end of this sylvan palace being elevated on a dais of four steps of emerald turf. Around these tables hover attendant shepherdesses, dressed in satin and cloth of gold, in the costume of all the various provinces of France. As the state barges, draped in costly stuffs, emblazoned with the royal device, approach the island to the sound of sweet instruments, and the song of mermen and mermaids, the island shepherdesses dance after the manner of their respective provinces—the Poitevines, to the skirling of a bagpipe; the Provençales, to the clash of cymbals; the Burgundians, to the piping of the oboe; the Champenoises, to the life and tabor; the Bretonnes dancing the most vigorously of all. Dancing over, there enters a band of musical satyrs and lovely nymphs, but “envious fortune being unable to endure so much glory,” a heavy storm, accompanied by a deluge of rain, descends upon the fairy isle, scattering the gay company, and driving them to their boats for shelter pell-mell—a retreat giving rise to many comical adventures, and more queer stories of the general confusion of partners. One couple, however, is well matched, but they hardly laugh, these two, nor is their apparel so bravely decked with bright colours and sparkling gems, as that of the giggling dames and forward gallants who hurry to the water-side. Neither of these serious persons is of French birth. The woman, large-eyed and large-nosed, is a genuine Medici; the man is lean, haggard, and ascetic-looking, wearing a face as the face of Don Quixote. These two have come to an understanding—the woman having at

last yielded to her companion's energetic remonstrances. Catherine de' Medici and the Duke of Alba have decided on the destruction of the Huguenots; not yet for a little while—till the suspicions of watchful Jeanne d'Albret are quieted for ever, and “my plump Madge” shall catch them all—her charms proving very lime-twigs to the accursed heretics, and her gentle voice as the whistle of the fowler.

“Plump Madge” declares herself not averse to the Portuguese marriage scheme, which Guise and Philip the Second contrive to strangle between them, but secretly plots to secure her alliance with the Lorraine prince, till the news of his wedding with the Princess Porcian awakes her from her dream of love and ambition. Her fate is already decided by the stern mother who plays her children like pawns on a chess-board—so long as they permit her. She had an easy reign over poor gentle François, but sullen, wayward Charles is more difficult to deal with. The grim plot, arranged to the sound of life and tabor on the island in the Adour, is not to be communicated to him on any account till it is ripe for execution. Meanwhile, the queen-mother urges him to strengthen his own hands by marrying Madge to the young King of Navarre—the son of Jeanne d'Albret and Antoine de Bourbon—a prince with “more nose than kingdom,” the famous ancestor of long lines of kings. His chance of the French crown looks remote enough just now, for between him and it stand three brothers of the Valois—Charles, Henry, and François, Duc d'Alençon—but strong-minded Catherine has one weak point; she is superstitious to a fabulous degree, and is sorely troubled by the horoscope of Navarrese Henry, which declares that he will “reign in France.” Superstition and worldly wisdom are both served, by securing the fox-faced Huguenot as the husband of Madge.

Charles is not sorry to acquire an ally of his own. Between his mother and the Guises—his too-powerful relatives—and his rebellious Calvinistic subject, she is often lashed into fits of ungovernable fury, and bitterly bewails that no human being loves or cares for him, save only gentle Marie Touchet. As is his wont, this wild hunter of beasts and men, once seized with a project, pursues it to the end with savage vehemence. But there are obstacles to be overcome—obstacles even to the furious will of the Most Christian King. The pope, still occupy-

ing the centre of the European tapestry, is horror-struck at the proposal to wed a Catholic princess to a heretic leader, and the consent of the pope must be gained, for Henry and Marguerite are, in a fashion, cousins, and undoubtedly within the limit forbidden by the Church. The pope refuses a dispensation, and, moreover, sends his cardinal nephew to dissuade the king from his monstrous project. But another counsellor has the ear of Charles—one singularly out of place in the giddy court of Catherine—a grave, sad-visaged gentleman, the famous "Admiral" Coligny, who is quite won over by the arts of the Italian, and is anxious to pacify France by marrying the "fox of Béarn" to "plump Madge" as quickly as possible. A valiant and skilful soldier this admiral, but over simple-hearted and truthful to contend in political intrigue with the professed students of the Florentine. Carried away by the real sincerity of the king, and the pretended heartiness of the Duc d'Anjou and the queen-mother, the brave old warrior persuades Jeanne d'Albret to join the court at Blois—gay, brilliant Blois—the summer palace of François the First, with its great exterior staircase and ancient hall of the estates. Blois is especially joyful just now, glancing coquettishly down on the smiling Loire. Its quaint streets and lofty narrow staircases are swept by the "vertugadins" of merry dames and damsels, for it is the humour of the strange Italian that all should be bright and mirthful around her, as if to intensify the darkness within. While forming the centre of her bright bevy of dames and their circumambient gallants, Catherine loves a joke, and is no bad hand at quip and crank, merry conceit, and highly-seasoned repartee. But when the fête is over, she turns from the gorgeous figures which wave to and fro on the arras, and bending her steps towards a remote part of the ancient castle, after climbing many stairs, reaches the lonely turret projecting over the church of St. Nicholas. It is the observatory employed, not with any scientific purpose, but purely as an instrument for interrogating the obstinate stars which persist that Henry of Navarre will "reign in France."

The Queen of Navarre, who, reluctantly enough, has come to this giddy court at the entreaty of the admiral, is grievously shocked at all that she sees and hears, for the language of the court dames and gallants is happily new to the Puritan

Jeanne. Billingsgate and St. Giles's are names that convey but a faint idea of the "joyous remarks" and the "pleasant sayings" current at Blois in this bright springtide of 1572. Fêted and caressed by the king and his mother, wary Jeanne yet fears to bring her son to a place horrifying to every sentiment of decency. More difficulties arise. Catherine wishes the wedding to take place at Paris according to the Catholic rite. Jeanne objects to the mass, and insists on the ceremony being performed in some city less inimical to the Huguenots. Pending this debate Pope Pius the Fifth dies, and is succeeded by Gregory the Thirteenth, who displays more flexibility than his predecessor, but yet hesitates, till Charles loses all patience, and tells the Queen of Navarre one day, "My aunt, I honour you more than the pope, and love my sister more than I fear him. I am not a Huguenot, but I am not an ass. If the pope plays the fool too long, I will take Madge by the hand myself, and see her married in full conventicle." Just as the marriage contract is signed the Queen of Navarre dies—some say of pleurisy, others of poison—but nothing is now allowed to impede the ceremony.

The scene changes to old Paris—not the Paris of St. Louis, nor that in which luckless English Henry was crowned "despite of foes," but the Paris of the ruthless Renaissance. The castellated dwellings of the Middle Ages have developed into the hotels of great seigneurs—fortified more or less, and crammed with gentlemen armed to the teeth. A strange mixture of splendour and squalor this good city of Paris. Tall gabled houses nod towards each other over narrow streets ankle-deep in filth, with no approach to drainage save an open gutter. Gloomy passages and dreary alleys slink from the light of heaven. Thieves abound, though what they find to steal is a mystery, as after dark no honest citizen ventures abroad, lest he should be waylaid and plundered by the professional robber, or killed, out of pure joyousness of heart, by the gay gallants in search of adventures. The gallant is as unlike the person depicted by writers of romances and operas, as can well be imagined. He is splendid, but by no means clean, for the silken hose which adorn his nether limbs have previously been worn for a week or two by his innamorata, that they may comfort him the more, and awake his mind to deeds of chivalry. He by no means

flings his cloak around him, and issues forth armed only with his trusty rapier. Not he. The gallant on the way to a rendezvous is in his fashion a prudent man. Beneath his doublet of satin, slashed with the colours of the lady of his heart, lurks, for the better preservation of that organ, a finely-worked shirt of mail. His rapier, of portentous length, is supplemented by a long, left-handed dagger. Before him walk pages with flambeaux, and a stout man-at-arms, pike or arquebuse in hand. Behind and with him come two or three, or, if he be a great man, a dozen trusty friends to see him through his adventure. These chivalrous times are curiously practical when seen in contemporaneous tapestry. That terrible seeker of amorous adventures, the young King of Navarre, never stirs out of his room to perambulate the long corridors of the Louvre, where he is as yet only a guest, without a pikeman, for the way is short from the boudoir to the grave. The thing known as fair play is not yet invented, and man smites his enemy when and where he can take him at a disadvantage. The atmosphere of Paris is heavy with rumours. There is talk in council and ruelle, and strange conferences are held, between mighty chiefs of the faction of the Guises, and the provosts of the great guilds of the good city of Paris. Apart, aloof from these, the Huguenots shiver in their fortified hotels, for there is a scent of blood in the air, and the chiefs unvanquished in the field talk strangely of being led into a mousetrap. And yet these wary warriors have come hither on an occasion more fitting for silken favours than buff jerkins. They are bidden to a wedding banquet.

Henry of Navarre, still in mourning, has arrived in Paris, in the early days of August, at the head of a gallant train of eight hundred gentlemen, the flower of the Huguenot nobility. On the seventeenth of the month the betrothal takes place at the Louvre. On the following day the marriage is celebrated with "maimed rites" by the Cardinal de Bourbon. A strange scene. Not within the sacred fane, but outside the Cathedral of Notre Dame, a huge structure has been erected, of wood carved and hung with cloth of gold. Henry of Navarre—his mother two months dead—lays aside his mourning, and appears with his eight hundred gentlemen in brave attire of velvet, satin, and cloth of gold, strangely

pinched and slashed in the latest mode. Marguerite herself—splendid, and conscious of her splendour—"dressed in royal robes, with a crown and bodice of spotted ermine, glittering with the jewels of the regalia, and the royal mantle of blue, with four ells of train, carried by three princesses." Plump Madge; looking very handsome and triumphant, to be made a wife and a queen at last—albeit to a husband whose neighbourhood is unsavoury to those of delicate nostrils—people shouting and crowding to suffocation, while the bride hears mass, and her husband waits for her outside. Then come fêtes and dances, jousts and junketings, masques and merry-makings, the bells of Paris ringing out a merry peal—prophetic enough to some sharp ears of the tocsin of St. Germain l'Auxerrois.

Captain Blosset—a Burgundian Huguenot, distinguished by his valiant defence of Vezelay against the Catholic army—calls one morning on the admiral, and asks permission to go home.

"Why," asks Coligny, "why are you in such haste?"

"Because they mean no good to us in this place."

"What!" shouts the admiral, "do not you believe we have a good king?"

"Too good! Too good to us by far! That is why I want to go away; and, if you would do as I do, M. l'Amiral, you would do good to yourself and to the cause."

It is impossible to keep the sharp Burgundian, who takes to horse and away.

Hardly is he clear of Paris, than Mauververt's pistol-shot reaches the doomed admiral. Angry remonstrances and many threats are made by the Huguenots, and, at last, the king is told that he has no option, that his enemies are delivered into his hands, and that he may not let them go. This is a fearful time for a bride in the first week of her honeymoon. Everyone whispering, none telling her anything. Suspicious Huguenots avoiding her because she is Catholic. Catholics keeping their lips close, because she has married a Huguenot. Left to herself, she creeps into the ceremony of the "coucher" of the queen-mother, and feeling very lonely and wretched, sits down upon a coffer beside her sister Claude, Duchess of Lorraine, also very, very sad. The two young women sit, hand in hand, silently and wretchedly enough, in the great dimly-lighted room, hung with tapestry depict-

ing the martyrdoms of saints. At last the queen-mother perceives Madge sitting sorrowfully with her sister, and commands her to go to bed. As she makes her curtsy, her sister Claude seizes her by the arm, and, weeping bitterly, cries, "Oh God, my sister, do not go!" Madge is more frightened still, till Catherine flies into a passion and forbids Claude to tell her anything. The Duchess of Lorraine then flies out, and declares that her sister shall not be sent to the sacrifice; that the Huguenots will revenge themselves upon her. Nevertheless, the old queen is firm. The absence of Madge would give rise to suspicions. Her place is with her husband. Driven from her mother's presence, she seeks her husband, whom she finds already in bed, surrounded by thirty or forty zealots of his party, talking loudly of the attempt to assassinate the admiral, and resolving, the next morning—alas! for them, that next morning—to demand of the king that justice shall be done on the Guises, as otherwise they will "take the law in their own hands." Thus passes a night sleepless and of utter misery, the words of her sister Claude ringing ever in Marguerite's ears. As day breaks, her husband rises to go and play tennis till King Charles is awake, the weary woman tells her nurse to close the door, and sinks into a feverish sleep.

The awaking is frightful enough. There is loud knocking at the door, and cries of "Navarre! Navarre!" The nurse, thinking it must be the King Henry, opens the door, when in rushes a man streaming with blood, with arm and shoulder cut and slashed, and clings to the young queen—as frightened as he. Four archers pursue this M. de Lérans into the very nuptial chamber, and are only restrained from killing their man by M. de Nançay, captain of the guard—and a right merry, jovial gentleman, who laughs heartily at the comical picture of the wounded man holding fast to "plump Madge," and his four bloodhounds eager to tear him down. These worthies got rid of, jolly M. de Nançay remains with Marguerite, and "while she changes her dress, being all covered with blood," tells her all about the merrie jest in action this fine August morning. First he grants her the life of M. de Lérans, whom she stows away in the dressing-room till his wounds are healed, and then quiets her fears concerning her husband, assuring her that he is safe enough with the king in his cabinet,

where, by the way, is also the Prince de Condé—the king offering the choice of "mass, death, or Bastille." Covering Marguerite's shoulders with a mantle, pleasant M. de Nançay tells her not to be alarmed, that they are only killing all the Huguenots except her husband, and conducts her to the chamber of her sister Claude, where she arrives "more dead than alive." Just as she steps into the ante-chamber, she sees another gentleman pursued by the archers, and struck with a halberd within three paces of her royal person. Without, make themselves heard the rattle of arquebuses, the clash of swords, the triumphant yell of the white-scarved crusaders, and, now and then, the defiant roar of a knot of old soldiers who, despite chains and barriers, pike and gun, cut through their enemies and get clear off, while above all tolls the great bell of the church of the Auxerrois.

Another fold of the tapestry shows us Marguerite and the "kinglet" her husband, prisoners rather than rulers, as ornaments of the court of Charles and his successor, Henry—quickly returning from Poland at the news of his brother's death. There are schemes to effect the escape of the "fox of Béarn," but they are long unsuccessful, costing also the lives of Cocornas and La Mole—regarded, perhaps, with too kindly an eye by Marguerite. Then comes the famous hunting-party at Senlis and the escape of the husband, Marguerite being still at the court of Henry the Third—out of favour, too, with husband and kingly brother, and plotting with the Duc d'Alençon, her younger brother—but yet the ornament of society in the best period of the Renaissance. A period of charming costume and of culture excessively elegant, when compared with all that preceded it. Yet, with all this beauty and elegance, the age is full of savagery. The famous duel of the mignons will bear witness to this. It is true their hair is frizzed, the beard plucked from their soft chins, their ears pierced and jewelled, and their ruffs so vast that the head of a mignon "resembles that of St. John the Baptist on a charger;" but they are always ready with the steel, and die violent deaths almost to a man. So does their master, who, with all his vice and effeminacy, his look of ineffable weariness and scorn, his masks lined with almond paste to preserve his complexion, his love of female attire—"black satin slashed with white, puffed and pinched,

laced and frilled"—his hair dressed in two arches, à la Marie Stuart, his blackened eyebrows and face painted, is yet brave as a lion, as the red fields of Jarnac and Moncontour can testify. The Queen of Navarre is, for the time being, greatly smitten by the splendid figure of Louis de Clermont, better known as Bussy d'Amboise—the favourite of her younger brother—one of the ablest captains, and certainly the greatest swash-buckler, of his time. All the time he can spare from love-making he devotes to quarrelling and fighting. The king's "mignons" are the particular object of his attack. He misses no opportunity of insulting them both by word and deed. He loves to dress his own lackeys as richly as the king's favourites, and to go himself in attire of the severest simplicity. Marguerite's too susceptible heart is occupied by this paladin, who wears her colours—to wit, green and gold, white and violet—openly. Bussy comes to court from the wars covered with glory, meets Marguerite on her return from a journey to Spa, and delights the heart of that princess, whose undisguised admiration of him is a fertile subject for those sarcastic young gentlemen—Quélus, Saint-Luc, Livarot, Mangiron, and Saint-Megrin. To do Bussy justice, he is abundantly provided with wit—not of the delicate, high-dried kind, but rough and full-flavoured, strong military wit, as it were. Two or three attempts are made to assassinate him, but in vain. Impunity makes his tongue wag all the faster. Handsome, curly-haired Quélus—daintiest and bravest of the "mignons"—is his especial butt, never spared either before the throne or the altar. At last things come to such a pass that the king, insisting on a formal treaty of peace, compels the two enemies to embrace in his presence, but only provokes from Bussy one of his odd strokes of buffoonery. Nevertheless, the quarrel is patched up for a while, Bussy, and other friends of the king's brother, leading a joyous life with the royal mignons, whose life is one perpetual feast—merry, indeed, as it need be, for Fate has decreed that it shall be short enough. The court is on the best terms with the great citizens of Paris, who give entertainments three or four times weekly. Lent is given up to these amusements, which prove too much for a worthy churchman—the Cardinal de Guise, better known as the "Bottle Cardinal"—a fine

specimen of gourmand and gourmet, "who meddled with no other matters than those of the cellar and the kitchen, which he understood very well—far better than those of church and state."

A few more bright threads in Marguerite's web of life, and then all is dark in hue and coarse in fibre. The king has determined to establish, or rather to revive, the Order of the Holy Ghost—to found an order of knighthood in honour of his sister. This Order of the Holy Ghost, new to France, dates from the year 1353, when it was founded at Naples by Louis d'Anjou, King of Jerusalem, a descendant of the brother of St. Louis, whose statutes are extant, and came into the possession of Henry at Venice—a gift of the Serene Republic to the King of Poland. It is the first day of the new year, 1579, and the ceremony of inauguration is celebrated with great pomp in the church of the Augustines, magnificently decorated for the occasion.

The chevaliers and knights-commanders are gorgeous to look upon. They are clothed in a barret cap of black velvet, pourpoint, and trunks of cloth of silver, shoes and scabbard of white velvet, a great mantle of black velvet, embroidered round with fleurs-de-lys in gold, with tongues of flame intermingled, and the king's cypher in silver thread—the lining of orange satin. Over this mantle, instead of a hood, they wear a mantelet of cloth of gold, also enriched with fleurs-de-lys, tongues of flame, and cyphers like the great mantle. The collar of the order is formed of the king's and Marguerite's cyphers, interlaced with fleurs-de-lys and fiery tongues. From this hangs a cross of gold, of marvellous work in gold and enamel, in the middle of which is a white dove—the emblem of the Holy Ghost.

A great grief now oppresses Marguerite. The career of Bussy comes to an end. Fighting appears to agree with him, but letter-writing brings him to grief. In a moment of confidence, he writes a letter to the duke, his master, telling him that he is in pursuit of the "doe of the king's grand huntsman." The duke—false and fickle ever, and just now very weary of his too active partisan—shows the letter to the king his brother, who, detesting Bussy, reads it aloud to the grand huntsman himself—Charles de Chambre, Count of Montsoreau. This gentleman hies him to his castle of Montsoreau, near to Saumur, and compels his unhappy countess to write a letter to

Bussy, inviting him to visit her there. Arriving at midnight, he is assailed by Montsoreau and a dozen braves, and after a desperate combat, fought out as long as a bit of his sword remains in the hilt, he is finally slain, after killing several of his assailants.

Marguerite, inconsolable for a while, rejoins her husband at his little court at Nérac, and, allowed to act as she pleases, is the most complaisant wife in the world. But, as Henry of Navarre develops into Henry of France, he determines to divorce "plump Madge," now more than plump—with great fat cheeks, enormous shoulders, and goggle eyes set in a bald pate, crowned with a golden wig, shorn from the skulls of a "score of blonde lackeys." No longer resplendent at the great court of Paris, or the little one of Navarre, she keeps state, sorely straitened for cash at times, at the Castle of Usson. Years, luxurious and inglorious, pass by, and again the last of her race descends upon Paris; no longer a wife, but divorced, and taking it in such good part, that she is present at the coronation of her successor—Marie de' Medici. Eighteen years have improved neither the looks nor the morals of the ex-queen, who lives in great splendour at her palace in the Rue de Seine. But she is true to her destiny, and brings death to the favourites of her old age, as to the lovers of her youth. Bewigged and bepanthed, the old woman lives out an existence divided between devotion and dissipation. She outlives all—parents, brothers, husband, and lovers—and dies "greatly regretted as a princess, full of goodness and good intentions, who only did harm to herself." Saint Denis claims her body, but her heart—still at last—is deposited at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, of which she was founder. Thus, in the year 1615, fades out this notable figure of the last daughter of a royal house—famous and infamous as that of Pelops.

TWILIGHT.

A LONG, low room, with oaken-panelled walls,
And narrow windows looking to the west,
A quiet room, where flickering firelight falls
On folded hands of one who sits at rest;
Who rests and listens in the twilight gloom
To tender strains of music, soft and slow,
That rise, and fall, and flutter through the room
In wordless but melodious ebb and flow.
Without, a splendour lingers in the heaven,
Of rose, and purple, royal gold, and gray;
Green leaves are trembling in the breeze of even,
The nightingale's sweet voice comes o'er the way.
While overhead, in skies serene and far,
Shines, like an angel's smile, the evening star.

The long, hot hours of garish day are past,
The long, hard years of life draw to a close,
A tired hand and heart enjoy at last
Life's twilight hour before their long repose,
A blessed eventide of love and home,
Before the shadow of that darkness falls,
Whose deepest density enwraps the tomb,
And through whose awful mist Death's angel calls.
The sweet strains rise and fall; the twilight gray
Grows deeper in the room; but peace is borne
Unto that listener's heart from far away,
All eloquent with whispers of a morn
Songful and beautiful, prophesied to last
When noons of earth and nights of death are past.

EVADING THE LAW.

QUEEN ELIZABETH, in one of her trenchant speeches, roundly rated the lawyers for standing more upon form than matter, more upon syllables than the sense of the law. Had the subjects of the royal censure dared to answer her outspoken Majesty, they might have retorted that all manner of men, if it suited their interest, were apt to do the like, and hold by the letter rather than the spirit. When Pope Innocent put England under an interdict, condemning its fertile fields to barrenness, the people—not yet sufficiently wise to laugh at a mortal pretending to control the operations of nature—might have starved but for some beneficent hair-splitters opportunely discovering that the interdict could only affect land under tillage at the time of its imposition, and therefore that crops might be raised upon the waste lands, commons, and fields hitherto unploughed. Necessity begets casuistry. The old knight, whose sacrilegious deeds earned him many an unheeded anathema, as he lay waiting the coming of death, remembered that he was an excommunicated man, sentenced to be damned, whether buried within the church or without the church. Although the contumacious reprobate had never found himself much the worse for ecclesiastic curses, he thought it advisable to be on the safe side; so, directing his body to be buried, neither within the church nor without the church, but in a hole cut in the outer wall, he died in that happy conviction.

Once upon a time, the governor of a city issued an order of the night, commanding every person walking about after dusk to carry a lantern. Sundry citizens were arrested for non-obedience, whereupon they produced their lanterns, and being asked what had become of the candles, replied that they were not aware candles were required. An amended order now appeared, but night-strollers wandered

about as much in the dark as before, and it was not until he commanded the candles to be lighted ones, that the governor got things done to his mind. This very old story is usually told of some continental city, but if such a farce were ever played at all, it is as likely as not that London was the scene of the performance. In 1418, a civic proclamation ordained that every honest person dwelling within the city limits should hang out "a lantern, with a candle in it, to burn so long as it might endure," from which it might be inferred, that the Londoners had heretofore lit their candles only to blow them out again, so that they were quite capable of poking fun at the authorities. Indeed, the latter would seem to have inclined to jocularly themselves, humorously insisting only upon honest folk lighting up, a limitation calculated, however, to ensure a general illumination. There was sense as well as humour in the defence made by the precise Parisian charged with allowing his dog to be at large without a muzzle—"The regulations do not say where the muzzle is to be put, and, thinking my dog would like to be able to breathe a little fresh air, I put the muzzle on his tail!" A similar omission in the Act requiring owners of common stage-carts to have their names painted upon them, led to the object of the law being defeated in various odd ways. Some painted the name where no one could see it, others scattered it all over the cart, a letter on a panel, and one ingenious fellow's vehicle bore the inscription: "A most odd Act on a stage-cart"—a clever anagrammatic arrangement of "Amos Todd, Acton, a stage-cart."

Legal nets were never cast for a more slippery fish than that triton among demagogic minnows, Daniel O'Connell, but clever as he was, like other cunning fish, he was caught at last. The suppression of the famous Catholic Association, followed up by the Act empowering the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, by his proclamation, to suppress and prohibit "the meeting, or adjourned, renewed, or otherwise continued meeting," of any association deemed dangerous to the public peace and safety, rendered it difficult for the liberator to carry on his agitation without getting into trouble. The plan he adopted was this: the persons forming his staff, when they found the Government anticipated them by proclaiming and prohibiting their meeting, met to declare the association dissolved, and assuming then and

there another name, called a meeting of the new association at an early day. By this means, two or three vice-regal proclamations were set at naught with impunity, but, when O'Connell met his followers at Usher's-quay, he had to announce that a proclamation had been issued forbidding the meeting, which not only referred to all the names assumed time after time, but prohibiting the assemblage of the same body of persons under any style or denomination whatsoever. The agitator comforted his despondent hearers with the assurance, that they might safely meet again in Dawson-street after breaking up. Here his legal acumen was at fault. The repealers met an hour afterwards, as their leader counselled them, and, by so doing, supplied the link wanting on former occasions, it being evident that the persons assembling in Dawson-street were members of the association that had met at Usher's-quay, after being prohibited by proclamation. Trapped at length, O'Connell was tried for the offence and convicted, but even then his luck did not desert him. He could not be called up for judgment until the following term, and, in the meantime, Parliament was dissolved, and the Act under which he was indicted expiring with it, the whole proceedings came to an end. Ringing the changes was practised more successfully by the money-lenders interested in defeating the Bills of Sale Act of 1854, which required the registration of every bill of sale within twenty-one days of its execution. Instead of registering the bills of sale, they held them for twenty days, and then exchanged them for new ones, effectually nullifying the statute without breaking the law, the courts deciding, "with regret," that such evasions were not illegal.

A few years back, the streets of salt Droitwich were in such a deplorable condition, that the turnpike trustees offered to give a hundred pounds per annum out of the trust funds towards repairing the roadways, until they were all put into proper order, provided the parish raised a similar amount, so as to make up two hundred pounds a year. In accordance with this arrangement, operations were commenced in 1865, but when the surveyor's accounts were presented to the magistrates, one of the ratepayers disputed the legality of the payment, and the magistrates, much against the grain, were obliged to disallow the item. The Corporation of Droitwich, determined to keep

faith for the honour of the town, voted the mayor an annual allowance of a hundred pounds, and his worship generously presented that identical sum to the repairing fund; thus securing the rehabilitation of Droitwich in a perfectly legal manner. Shrewd folks have sometimes managed to get the weather-gage of the law, by simply shifting the responsibility. When the laughter at locksmiths was not above invoking a blacksmith's aid, abducting a heiress being a criminal offence, gentlemen taking a trip over the Border with a well-dowered damsel were careful to make it appear the lady was the abductor. Upon a happy pair reaching Carlisle, the post-horses for the last stage were ordered by the bride expectant, her companion becoming non est for the moment; and the goal attained, the lady paid the postillions, sent for the forger of the matrimonial bonds, and, when he had done his office, satisfied his demands out of her own purse. A female toll-taker, sued by the turnpike trustees for money she held belonging to them, and ordered to pay up, induced a travelling tinker to make her his wife, and, when summoned for contempt, produced her marriage certificate, and pleaded that the trustees must look to her husband for payment of the debt, owning, at the same time, that she did not know, nor want to know, what had become of him. Alphonse Karr, finding it convenient to leave Paris for awhile, betook himself to Italy to start a newspaper there. He succeeded in obtaining the patronage of the king and of Count Cavour, but the minister would not listen to his dispensing with the encumbrance of a responsible editor. He did not dispute the absurdity of the law, but, being the law, it must be obeyed. Karr's printer quickly settled matters by engaging a man to fill the post for a salary of thirty francs a month. Karr never set eyes upon his responsible editor, and that worthy was answerable for the doings of a man of whom he knew absolutely nothing, and over whom he had no control.

The truth of the saying, "Where there's a will there's a way," was exemplified in a more comical way by a tramp who was refused a night's lodging at a police-station in Maine, the officer on duty explaining, "We only lodge prisoners; you've got to steal something, or assault somebody, or something of that kind." "Oh, I've got to assault somebody, have I?" remarked the vagabond, and knocked the sergeant off his stool; and when the astonished

officer had picked himself up again, quietly said, "Give me as good a bed as you can, mister, 'cause I don't feel very well to-night!"

How London managers and actors evaded Walpole's Licensing Act has already been told in these pages.* How their provincial brethren eluded its pains and penalties, we learn from Roger Kemble's advertisements in *Berrow's Worcester Journal*. In 1767, the faithful city was visited by "Mr. Kemble's Company of Comedians;" they opened at the theatre at the King's-head, with a celebrated comedy, called *The Tempest*, or the *Enchanted Island*, as altered from Shakespeare by Mr. Dryden and Sir W. D'Avenant, with all the scenery, machinery, music, monsters, and other decorations proper to the piece, entirely new. Roger Kemble doubled the parts of the Duke of Mantua and Stephano, his wife played *Amphitrite*, Miss F. Kemble *Mitchea*, Miss Kemble took *Ariel*, and her future husband, Mr. Siddons, *Hyppolito*. Respecting the rest of the *dramatis personæ* the playbill is silent, but it tells us that the Concert of Musick, for which tickets were to be had at the usual places, would begin exactly at half an hour after six o'clock, and that the comedy would be presented gratis between the parts. When the company moved on to Wolverhampton, even the concert was advertised as a gratuitous entertainment, but the tickets were only obtainable of one Mr. Latham, who had packets of tooth-powder from London, in two-shilling, shilling, and sixpenny papers, on sale at his shop, and if he chose to reserve the concert tickets for the purchasers of tooth-powder, that was "nothing to nobody."

Shortly after a revision of the American tariff, resulting in the imposition of a heavy duty upon lead and the freeing of imported works of art from taxation, twenty-four grotesque-looking leaden effigies of Lord Brougham were to be seen, standing all of a row, on the custom-house wharf at New York. They had been consigned to a merchant by an English firm as works of art, a description the American officials refused to endorse, insisting that they were mere blocks of lead. The question was referred to the lawyers; and when, after three months' consideration, the courts pronounced in favour of their artistic origin, collectors of curiosities bought the hideous statues

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 13, p. 79, "The Licenser of Playhouses."

at prices far beyond their metallic value, to preserve them in remembrance of the Britishers having, for once in a way, proved too cunning for their cousins.

To overreach the tax-gatherer is too generally regarded as a venial species of knavery. In the days of high postal rates people resorted to all sorts of dodges to cheat the Post Office of its dues, not the least extraordinary being that recorded in Sir George Jackson's Bath Archives: "Miss C. has written to ask if the hares she sent me a month ago had arrived, and the letters with which they were stuffed. Now, the hares I acknowledged; but, not being aware that their stomachs were used as post-bags, the letters were thrown in the fire, as I have since learnt from my cook. On my telling her of what the stuffing of the hares chiefly consisted, she drew herself up, and, with a dignified air, asked how she was ever to suppose that a town lady would do so nasty a trick; or how I could suppose that she didn't better know her duty than to send up on a silver plate, for drawing-room reading, such dirty bits of blood-soiled paper that she, in the kitchen, wouldn't touch with her fingers? I own that I had little to say in defence of Miss Clayston's ingenious device for defrauding the revenue, which deserved, as it did, to come to a bad end." Nowadays, there is no temptation to cheat the Postmaster-General; but, thanks to the mode of levying the Income-tax, the penny-saved, penny-got utilitarians, as Coleridge calls them, are enabled to make their game for higher stakes. Your prosperous man of business, if he will, as he too often does will, finds it easy enough to escape paying his quota of taxation. When the compensation claims arising out of the demolition of property, for the making of Queen Victoria-street, were sent in, the Income-tax Commissioners discovered that the claimants, by their own showing, had made false returns for years, and, of course, came down upon them for surcharges. In one case a return of two hundred and fifty pounds had been made in 1865, where a surcharge of one thousand nine hundred pounds, in 1867, was confirmed on appeal. Upon another return of two thousand pounds, the parties were found to be liable on three thousand three hundred and eleven pounds; and they justified themselves on the ground that their returns were fully as large, in proportion to their incomes, as those made by others in trade. In this, perhaps, they spoke truly: for, in a third case, the ac-

countants employed in making the claims for compensation deposed that, for four years, the profits of the firm had averaged four thousand four hundred and seventy-seven pounds; although, during that time, they had made no Income-tax return at all. In another case a return of two thousand pounds, was surcharged to nine thousand pounds; and it was proved that in one year, when the firm paid on nine hundred pounds, their profits amounted to ten thousand. The aggregate of the taxable income of the entire body of claimants for compensation was, according to their own statements, a hundred and seventy-one thousand three hundred and seventy-pounds; the amount they had paid upon was seventy-three thousand six hundred and forty-two pounds! A still more flagrant instance was noted by the commissioners in one of their reports. A person, returning his income at one thousand five hundred pounds, was charged upon twenty thousand pounds, and paid without demur. The following year he made no return, and, being assessed on forty-five thousand pounds, paid duty on that amount; and in the next year the amount was raised to sixty thousand pounds with the same result. Mr. Hubbard lately stated in Parliament, and the statement passed unchallenged, that, while forty-four millions was the amount of income returned on assessment, a hundred and one millions was that which should be returned; the difference of fifty-seven millions being the sum on which duty was evaded, signifying, at the old twopenny rate, a fraud upon the revenue to the amount of four hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds per annum—a fraud, be it remembered, perpetrated by men rich enough to be honest without inconvenience.

Experience teaches that legislation running counter to public opinion is so much legislation wasted. Parliament once thought to stop dram-drinking, by raising the duty on gin, and putting an exorbitant price upon spirit-licences. All it succeeded in doing was to prevent licences being taken out, to the injury of the revenue, while gin went down the throats of the multitude more freely than ever. The law was violated in every way ingenuity could devise. From one end of London to another a roaring trade was done in contravention of the law, almost every chemist supplying the popular comforter under some suggestive fancy name. Informers were treated as public enemies

and lynched, even to death, without compunction, while the magistrates were wonderfully lenient to any offenders that were brought before them, for although it is easy to invent new crimes, it is not always easy to make men look upon them as such, and after awhile the obnoxious Act was repealed, as something far worse than a failure.

The tactics successfully adopted against the Gin Act have been repeated, with variations, in our own time, wherever the Maine Liquor Law has been established. A traveller in Colorado wished to get some whisky as an antidote against possible snake-bites. Not a drop was to be had, but he was told he would find spirits of ammonia, to be obtained of any chemist, quite as efficacious. Determined to be prepared for any amount of snake-poison, he had his quart-flask filled as advised; and tasting it, out of curiosity, declared, if he had not known better, he could have sworn it was Bourbon whisky; just as Henry Phillips was prepared to make an affidavit of the impossibility of distinguishing between genuine cognac and the sarsaparilla the black steward of a "temperance ship" recommended for the prevention of seasickness. In Ohio the potions dispensed by the druggists are carefully wrapped in paper, that the sharpest eye may not discern if a customer carries away with him an embrocation, a black draught, or a bottle of unmitigated Bourbon. The bar-keepers satisfy the law forbidding spirits to be sold over the bar, by passing round the counter to serve their customers; or invite them to take a seat in a room behind the bar and supply their wants there. In Vermont, the dram-seeker passes into a private room, is locked in, and indulges in his particular vanity, unseen by friendly or unfriendly eyes. At some places the liquor-dealers only sell crackers or biscuits, the cracker-buyer receiving a glass gratis to wash the dry stores down. Wanting a stimulant, Mr. Dawson was directed to a fruit-seller's, and entering the shop passed through it into a small room furnished with two cupboards, a counter, and a man. To the last-named he put the question, "What sort of stuff is Bourbon whisky?" Without a word, the man went to one of the cupboards, produced a bottle and a glass, and satisfied the enquirer in the most practical way; giving him a paper requesting him to pay so many cents to the cashier in the shop. The man who gave Mr. Dawson the whisky took no

money for it, the man who took his money supplied him with no whisky. Mr. Ward's kangaroo was not such a profitable "cuss" to him as the half-starved wolf constituting the entire menagerie of a travelling showman, owning naught else, save a dirty tent and a mysterious-looking keg. Upon arriving at a likely "pitch," the showman announced that the wolf was on view at the charge of six cents a head. After one or two sight-seers had seen what was to be seen, patrons poured rapidly in, to come out wiping their lips, apparently satisfied with having had their money's worth. One man developed an unsuspected interest in natural history, looking in eight times in the course of an afternoon; then he made a start homewards, but after going a few steps, stopped, turned over his pockets, turned round, walked back to the tent, and as he paid the entrance fee, stuttered out, "I b—b—lieve I'll take another look at that wolf!"

Yankee smartness has been displayed in evading other laws, besides that especially admired by the advocates of permissive prohibition. A railway company having to run a curve of their line through a street in New York, an operation necessitating the blocking of the public way, set their men to work on Sunday, no injunction against their proceedings being obtainable on that day. The suppression of the game of ninepins was met by the invention of ten pins. When the selling of clocks by travelling traders was forbidden in Alabama, the Yankee clock pedlers let them on lease for nine hundred and ninety-nine years. Ordered to close their bars at midnight, the San Francisco liquor-sellers shut their doors as the clock struck twelve, and opened them five minutes afterwards for the next day's business. The Civil Rights Act ordained that negroes were for the future to be placed on the same footing as the whites at "inns, public conveyances by land or water, theatres, and other places of public amusement." In the North the Act was quietly ignored. In the South, where that could not safely be done, it was evaded. Upon a negro pushing his way into a pew, occupied by a white lady, the minister immediately dismissed the congregation. Managers of places of public entertainment sold all their admission tickets to one gentleman, who announced his willingness to dispose of them at treble the price he paid, "allowing a discount in certain cases"—that was, when the applicant chanced to be of the right

colour. Hotel-keepers closed their establishments for a few days, re-opening them as boarding-houses, which were not included in the Act; and one ready-witted bar-keeper avoided that inconvenience by issuing a notice that, owing to circumstances unnecessary to recount, he was forced to adopt in future the following rates: "Beer, by the glass, ten dollars; whisky toddy, fifteen dollars; brandy, straight, twelve dollars; and so on in proportion. To regular customers a liberal discount will be made." The Civil Rights Act, by all accounts, appears to have as fair a prospect of fulfilling its purpose as our own Betting Act, which was to make betting—at least, ready-money betting—impossible. Yet book-makers and backers are still to the fore, giving and taking the odds. The bettors upon commission are, indeed, condemned to voluntary exile, and can no longer advertise their business or their "prices;" but they console themselves with knowing that the law cannot prevent them letting their friends know where they live, nor exclude the "betting at Boulogne" from the columns of the sporting papers; and, by putting this and that together, those inclined to back their fancy get all the information they require. As for the poor tipsters, threatened with extinction, they have transformed themselves into editors; their circulars into duly registered newspapers, wherein they discourse after their wonted fashion, and advise their subscribers of good things and certainties, all enactments to the contrary notwithstanding.

SOLDIERS' DRESS.

THE most savage tribes have been of one accord with civilised nations, as to the expediency of a special garb for war. The red and yellow ochre that besmear the grim face of a Cheyenne brave, as he takes up the tomahawk against the detested whites; the black and vermilion blazonry of an Apache chief; form no unmeaning display in the eyes of the wearers, since every streak and shade has been dictated by immemorial tradition. It was the same with the tinted feather-work armour and gold gorgets, of the Mexicans who vainly confronted Cortes. Every Indian there knew his own tribesmen by the fillet bound around the head, and his cacique by the nodding crest and hauberk, gorgeous with the plumage of the humming-bird and paroquet. But the first actual uniform of

which we read was that of the Great King's body-guard—those Persian Immortals, with golden suns flashing on their broad breasts, whom it was the proudest boast of the Greeks to have crushed at Marathon.

The Greeks themselves—soldier-citizens, from the mounted dandy who fought on horseback, to the sober spearman who left his shop, to take his place in the front of the bristling phalanx—went to war, as they went to labour, in close-fitting tunic and greaves; and it must have been difficult, save by the device on the shield, to have known the militia of Argos from that of Athens, or the Spartan from the Theban. It was easy to point out the Roman legionary, laden like a beast of burden, shod with nailed shoes, and conspicuous by his tall helmet and the long buckler, with S.P.Q.R. upon it, that protected almost his entire person from Jewish javelins or Gaulish arrows.

The colours of the clan tartan, at Killiecrankie and Prestonpans, no less than when Agricola marched against the wild Scots, rendered it facile for one Celt, in the confusion of battle, to recognise a kinsman or an enemy; but during the long struggle on English ground between Danes and Englishmen, it was very difficult to tell friend from foe, so alike, at a little distance, were the peaked helmets and gleaming mail-shirts of the combatants. In strictly feudal times the same inconvenience was often felt. No one could, of course, pretend to give uniforms to a forty-days' army, the units composing which might very possibly, six months later, be arrayed in rebellion against the very monarch under whose standard they marched. Hence it became of the utmost importance to remember the personal badges of the principal knights and lords, since a falcon-crest, a dragon-shield, or a lion-broidered banner could alone serve as the rallying-point of regiments and brigades.

As we enter on the gunpowder period, the time when there were nearly as many arquebusiers as pikemen in the ranks of the infantry, we find white shirts, worn over the steel armour or the leather jerkin, in great request as a means of distinguishing the stormers, when a night attack was made upon a town. This was notably the case at Geneva, where mummers yet rehearse the all-but-successful escalade of the Papist Savoyards; while Scott has made picturesque use of the practice, in Quentin Darward, as an incident of the

recapture of Liege by Charles the Bold of Burgundy. "Save me from my friends!" was the motto of assailants thus attired; nor was the precaution useless, for, even at Waterloo, blue-clad officers of British light cavalry were shot down, as Frenchmen, by the 67th of the Line.

The Free Companies that, in mediæval Italy, earned their bread at the expense of the peaceful population—half-robbers and half-mercenaries—were too loosely held together by the bonds of discipline to be dressed alike. But the Swiss in the pay of Italian princes—those formidable hirelings, prized by their masters, but hated by the natives of Italy with a hate such as we in England, whose hearthstones have never resounded to the swaggering step of a foreign soldier, can scarcely realise—wore the quaint distinctive High-German garb. The Pope's Swiss halberdiers wear it, slightly modified, to this day. The English bowmen—half of them supplied by the city of London—who won Agincourt, made no attempt at uniform. When they marched down Cheape, no doubt, they were decently clad, with flat caps, gray or blue hose and jerkins, arm-brace, bow, and quiver. But they were in rags, without cap or shoe, when their clothyard arrows turned the scale of victory.

The redoubtable Turkish Janizaries—the "new soldiers," as their name denotes: long the finest body of disciplined troops in Europe or Asia—were perhaps the first to wear a regular uniform. The very sight of their high head-gear, decorated by a sleeve, in remembrance of Hadji Bektash, their founder, once carried consternation among the opponents of the Crescent, on the Danube or beside the Bosphorus. The Yammacks, too, a sort of Turkish Marines, abolished by Sultan Mahmoud at the time of the massacre of their better-known comrades, wore a blue and gold jacket, only too familiar to the unwarlike Levantines.

Presently, as monarchs grew richer, and power more centralised, certain colours came to denote the armies of various continental countries. The Spanish yellow, the Austrian white, the Swedish blue, were proverbial long before the Bourbons began to attire their grenadiers in white coats, and before anyone in England dreamed of a permanent uniform. During the civil wars, Royalist and Parliamentarian dressed anyhow, and a field of battle must have been as many-coloured as an old-fashioned flower-garden—Sir Byng's Greens, or my Lord of Derby's Blues, coming into colli-

sion with Harrison's Red Lambs, or the Hazlerigg Cuirassiers, in sad-tinted cassocks. But what the officers of both factions wore, when they could beg, borrow, buy, or steal it, was the buff-coat, proof against sword-cut and spent-bullet, worth some eighty or a hundred pounds of our money, and the loss of a specimen of which, in a lawless raid of pillaging Cavaliers, the husband of Lucy Hutchinson so piteously bewailed. At last Cromwell's taste in military tailoring prevailed, and the red coat was definitively established as the wear of British soldiers. Our insular scarlet, first seen beyond seas at the siege and taking of Dunkirk, had the merit of being unique. No continental infantry, with the exception of the Swiss regiments in French pay, wore red. The Scandinavian countries, then of greater political weight than they now are, dressed their troops in blue. The semi-disciplined host of the Grand Duke of Muscovy, or, as some began to style him, His Czarish Majesty, wore gray gaberdines, or greasy sheepskins. The far mightier emperor at Vienna ordered white coats for Croat and Pandour, Bohemian and Illyrian. During the eighteenth, and the first few decades of the present century, the authorities at the Horse Guards appeared to regard the British soldier as a live doll, to be dressed so as to combine the minimum of comfort with the maximum of display. The pattern, to be sure, was a German one, but successive commanders-in-chief and their zealous subordinates were always trying to improve upon their model, to stiffen the spines, to tilt up the chins to a more unnatural angle, and to tighten the belts of the smartly-drilled defenders of their country. It reflects no small credit on our soldiers, that in strangling stocks, strapped, braced, and buckled to the uttermost, and excruciatingly tight about the knees, they contrived to scramble up the Heights of Abraham, and, at Lincelles and San Sebastian, found their way over breach and wall.

Eighty years ago, a young recruit, whose hair had been carelessly cropped by the regimental barber, was often unable to shut his eyes on account of the remorseless dragging back of the forelock to serve as a fulcrum for the artificial pigtail, without which he dared not come upon parade. Serious petitions at about the same date were presented to the king, praying that his Majesty, on account of the dearth of bread, would excuse the suspension of the general order that the army should appear

with powdered heads, and entering into elaborate calculations as to the amount of flour daily wasted in whitening the locks, not of the regulars alone, but of the militia, pensioners, fencibles, yeomanry, and the many regiments of red-coated volunteers which then converted England into the likeness of a monstrous camp.

The gay Hussar uniform, and with it, for light cavalry alone, the moustache, were borrowed from the enemy during the long war with France, and the innovation was greeted with sneers, of which we may see some faint reflex in the minor poems of Sir Walter Scott. The experience of Waterloo augmented the picturesque appearance of our Household Cavalry, by the adoption of the French cuirass. Gradually the light of common sense began to filter through the chiaro-oscuro of Horse Guards' tradition. First the pigtail was lopped off; then the hair-powder was brushed out; next went the tightness at the knees, and the preposterous gaiters. Presently, in the heat of the Crimean struggle, and sorely in despite of sundry respectable Peninsula martinet generals, the sacred stock itself was tampered with, the belts loosened, and the upper lip, and for that matter the lower lip too, of the foot soldier, was exempted from the razor. Of late years it may be safely said that every change in soldiers' clothing and accoutrements, on both sides of the Channel, has been made with a view to his improved health and greater efficiency. Abroad and in England, much ingenuity has been expended in lightening the knapsack, in preventing the pressure of the cross-belts on heart and lung, and in devising tunics, caps, and great-coats, which should be slightly, and yet comfortable. A perfect uniform may perhaps never be devised, although the late Emperor Napoleon, when he attired his famous Zouaves in oriental apparel, believed that he had found one; but it is at all events fortunate for those who fight our battles that we have got out of the old-world groove of pipe-clay, impossible shakoes, and tight coatees.

WHAT HE COST HER.

BY JAMES PAYN,

AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MASSINGBERD," "AT HER MERCY,"
"HALVES," &c.

CHAPTER XLII. A MOTHER'S DARLING.

WE have now to accompany another traveller, upon the same line of rails that bore Cecil Landon and Rose Mytton to

their destiny, some six months ago. It is late autumn with external nature, but in the heart of Hugh Darall beats the eternal spring. He has parted from the girl he loves, but only for a while, for he has her promise to be his bride in a few weeks. His heart is full of sweet and precious thoughts of her. Even the intervening time that lies between to-day and his marriage morn, is not without its own happiness. He is going to see his mother in her new home, which is presently to be also his and Gracie's. The old lady is devoted to him, and the tidings that he brings her will, he knows, be eagerly welcomed. Thanks to the good offices of Sir Hercules, and his own merits, he has obtained an appointment, which, although very slenderly remunerated, will enable him, with his pay, to wed. His income, all told, will not even amount to that proverbial three hundred pounds a year, upon which everybody, who is anybody, knows that it is "madness" to marry.

Fortunately, Darall and Gracie were nobodies, to whom, therefore, that stringent rule of society did not apply. They were going to "risk it," and, notwithstanding the danger of the experiment, very happy they both were in the prospect of so doing. It would certainly be a love-match, yet not altogether brought about by thoughtless passion. Circumstances, as we are aware, in the person of the commissary—himself a somewhat too ardent swain—had precipitated it; and it had some sanction for Gracie at least, in the confidence which her dead mother had always expressed in the object of her choice. Gracie had told him as much, and Darall had replied, "And when *my* mother comes to know you, darling, she will have confidence in *you*—with much more reason for it—and only wonder why I didn't run away with you, appointment or no appointment, when I got my commission." They had talked great rubbish together, in short, from which—please to take notice—we have quoted but that single extract.

There was no lovely damsel in distress for money for her railway ticket in Darall's case; he met with no "interesting" adventures—some philosophers would tell us because he was in no humour for them—but travelled in peace, and with pleasant dreams over his cigar in the smoking carriage, to his journey's end. He got out at Pullham, because he had to arrange some business there, and afterwards walked by a short cut of five miles across the fields to

Grantham, whither his portmanteau had preceded him. The quiet beauty of the evening mingled with his own bright thoughts, and "made their round complete." It is not to the eye of the young and hopeful that the "happy autumn fields" bring the tears of divine despair; the memory of the days that are no more does not intrude upon them; they look before, not after, because their brightest days are in the store-house of the future, not the past. Beyond the last stile was the little inn with which we are acquainted, the Stranger's Rest. And there Darall enquired for his mother's house, Wold Cottage.

"You pass the rectory, sir, yonder, and then straight on till the second turning as leads to the moor; it's the only house there is after that," were the directions given to him.

But there were other houses to pass beside the rectory; one a small, verandahed dwelling, called—as he afterwards came to know—The Casket, from whence, though the lights were in the windows, he heard a pleasant sound of laughter from the hidden garden at its back. "Those are healthy folks," thought he, "who stay out to the last in the open-air." One pure laugh—it was Rose's—went to his very heart, for it reminded him of Gracie's mirth.

Wold Cottage, although so called from its proximity to the moor, was itself buried in trees, and would have been hard to find, but for the light it showed as he drew near, not at the window, but at the open door. There stood his mother, lamp in hand, which she had carried out from her little parlour at the first sound of his footstep; she had already given two wandering tramps the same fiery welcome, and they had cost her some alarm and a shilling, but here was her Hugh at last, in whose arrival all fear and mischances were forgotten. She was a little gray-haired woman, aged, but still vigorous, and with a bright look in her eyes—that the glad tears could not quench. For some time she was not very communicative, she uttered little else except, "My boy, my boy," which simple words, however, had a certain eloquence of their own, and occupied herself with an affectionate scrutiny of his face and limbs. Then finding him safe and sound, and unchanged in all respects—which was in her eyes equivalent to perfection—she began to talk a little.

"You have brought your uniform with you this time, my darling, I do hope."

"No, indeed, mother, I have not," returned he, laughing; "one doesn't wear one's uniform on survey, you know."

This was the only ground of discontent the old lady had ever had with her beloved son. He would not visit her in uniform, and she had never seen him in anything more gorgeous than the attire of a gentleman-cadet. It was so cruel of him not to take her to church one day, accoutred with his sword and shako. Thus apparelled, she felt sure he must look like an archangel.

"And how do you like your new house, mother?"

"It is perfect, dear, every way; only so much too big for you and me."

"Then it would hold another person, perhaps—another lady—if absolutely necessary? Eh?"

"Lor', Hugh, you don't say so! It's Gracie, of course!"

He nodded; and she threw her arms about his neck and blessed them both. She had been prepared for this piece of intelligence ever since he had begun to mention Gracie in his letters—now more than a year ago. And though she had never said a word to him on the matter, had guessed what use he would make of his "government post," as she called his modest appointment, should opportunity offer.

"And to think that I have never set eyes on your darling yet," said she, with a smile and a tear.

"I have her photograph in my pocket, mother; and you will see the original in a month or two."

To see her pore over Gracie's picture, and then compare it with Hugh's honest face, was as good as a play.

"I am sure I shall love her," said she. "And she's very pretty, very; but not quite pretty enough—that is, for you, dear."

"But she is quite pretty enough for me, I do assure you, mother; or for anybody else, for that matter."

"Oh, for anybody else, of course, Hugh; but—perhaps I'm partial—"

"Oh, I see. You mean that she is not so pretty as I am," cried Hugh, bursting into a roar of laughter. "Well, then, I do think you are just a little partial, mother."

The old lady shook her head as though in contradiction of this view; but we have reason to believe that her opinion was as her son had stated, and that it remained unshaken. Never was such a merry party

of two—considering they were, in years, as June and January—as those two that evening. Mrs. Darall had sent her one little maid to bed, so that they could sit up and chat as long as they pleased without interruption.

After the subject of Gracie had been exhausted, which, however, took a very long time, we may be sure, and even included a mapping out of the cottage, in contemplation of the new arrangements, the old lady began to talk of her own affairs. The village was charming; “but as for the people, my dear, of course, I know nothing of them as yet; nor should even have cared to know, perhaps—that is in the way of society—but for this change in your plans, which will of course render it necessary. The clergyman, a Mr. Welby, has called upon me, and was very kind and sociable. He says I shall find a certain Miss Helen Mytton most delightful, which I suppose means that he is in love with her; men—that is, some men,” added the old lady hurriedly, “take every goose for a swan under those circumstances.”

“I am afraid some mothers take the same view of their ganders,” observed Hugh, slyly.

“I believe they do,” answered the old lady, innocently; “and nothing is more ridiculous. How lovely your moustache is getting on, my dear!”

“The gander’s down,” murmured Hugh; but she took no notice, her faith was of that exceptional kind which is not affected even by ridicule. “It was very good of Gracie,” she continued, “to let you come down to your old mother.”

“Gracie always does what is right,” returned Darall, simply. “Moreover, she is quite content to remain for the present where she is, thanks to the kindness of her friend Mrs. Landon.”

“There’s a Mrs. Landon here at Grant-ham, by-the-bye,” remarked the old lady; “a sister of that Miss Helen Mytton the vicar raves about; she was only married the other day, and is now on her wedding-trip. I suppose the next bride at Grant-ham will be Gracie.”

“Well, our wedding will take place in London, mother, since Gracie’s hostess is so good as to wish her to be married from her house, and her own home is out of the question. But we shall soon return hither; as we shall not have much money to spend in touring.”

“Mr. and Mrs. Landon make a short tour too,” observed the old lady, for whom

marriages had always an interest—as they do have with all good women—and had just now a special attraction by reason of Hugh’s engagement; “not because of a light purse, however, but because he has so much to do. He has to run all about the country, it seems, though the headquarters of his business are in London.”

Who has not experienced, from their dearest and nearest, and especially when they grow old, these uninteresting disquisitions upon young Mr. and Mrs. Jones, their neighbours, the narration of whose history makes us wish that happy pair dead, buried, and, above all, forgotten?

“It seems so curious,” continued Mrs. Darall, “that you should have come down straight from your Mrs. Landon’s house to a village like this, and find another Mrs. Landon.”

“It is not a very uncommon name, mother,” said Hugh, suppressing a yawn. “Is it not getting rather late?”

“Dear heart alive!” cried the old lady, consulting a venerable silver watch, “I daresay you are tired to death with your day’s journey.”

On the morrow, Hugh was taken out for what his mother called “a trot,” a word which had more significance, in an equine way, than she imagined; for no horse-dealer was ever more eager to trot out his four-legged property for the admiration of beholders, or would have been more eager to conceal its defects had any existed, than was this excellent old lady in the case of her son. As they passed by the Vicarage, Mr. Welby, who was at work in his garden, came out to greet Mrs. Darall and to claim an introduction to her soldier son.

He was very pleasant and cordial, and “you and your mother must come and dine with me next week to meet our bride and bridegroom,” were his parting words.

“Why does he call this Mrs. Landon ‘our bride?’ enquired Hugh, laughing; “will he use the possessive pronoun to Gracie also, I wonder?”

“Well, you see, he will be your clergyman, my dear,” replied the old lady, to whom the church and all connected with it was a matter of sincere though somewhat mystic adoration.

“Oh, I see, it’s a question of tithe,” returned Hugh, gravely. “Then he will only claim a tenth of her after all?”

“I suppose so,” said the old lady, simply. “But with respect to Mrs. Landon, he is very intimate with the family at The Casket; that is the name of their house,

and there it is. And, oh dear me! I suppose this is the famous Miss Helen."

It was indeed Helen herself, who, as they drew near the cottage, stepped out from the verandah and met them face to face.

She bowed, and held out her hand to the old lady. "I was about to do myself the pleasure of calling upon you, Mrs. Darall, this afternoon, and I must not pass you in the street without a word."

Then Hugh was introduced, and as their way lay in the same direction, the three walked on together quite socially. Mrs. Darall was a little nervous with strangers, but Helen's natural and gracious manner soon put her at her ease. When Helen spoke of the neighbourhood and its objects of interest, the old lady politely answered, "But you have left out your own house, The Casket, Miss Mytton, which Mr. Welby tells me is the prettiest place of all."

"Oh, but the vicar is not to be credited on that point," said Helen, laughing. "He is always wild about our cottage, because, I suppose, he gave it its name. However, such as it is, I hope you will soon come and judge for yourself. My sister, Mrs. Landon, and her husband return on Saturday, after which we shall hope to see our friends, old and new."

"My son has a great friend of the name of Landon," observed Mrs. Darall, looking towards Hugh.

"Oh, indeed," said Helen. "I don't think he can be related, however, unless very distantly; my brother-in-law has no near belongings."

"My friend's business is chiefly in town," observed Hugh; "though he has of late been much engaged in the country."

"Well, so far, there is a coincidence," smiled Helen. "My brother-in-law's headquarters are in Greythorn-street."

"Ah, his namesake's are in Wethermill-street. It is curious, because I have heard Cecil's father say that there was no other house of business in London of the same name."

"Cecil!" said Helen, stopping short. "Did you say Cecil?"

"Yes; my friend's name is Cecil."

"Well, that is remarkable; for my brother-in-law's second name is also Cecil, though he is always called by his first name, Henry. Indeed, I should not have known that he had a second, had I not seen him sign it in the marriage register."

"I never heard of Hugh's Cecil having

any second name," observed Mrs. Darall; "if he had, I should certainly have known it, for at one time—that was when he was a cadet at Woolwich—the boy talked of nobody else; I used to get quite jealous of Mr. Cecil Landon."

"He was the brightest and the most agreeable, if not the cleverest fellow I ever knew," observed Darall, thoughtfully.

"But he does not treat his wife well," put in the old lady; "and so he is just now, very properly, in disgrace with Hugh."

"You should not say that, mother," observed Darall, gravely; "one is rarely in a position to hold the scales between man and wife."

"That is true," said Helen; "one knows so little about the real circumstances of anybody."

It was an observation less pertinent than she was wont to make; her manner was abstracted, and she spoke with an effort very unusual with her. In a few minutes she stopped at a labourer's cottage, and made a visit there the excuse for taking leave of her two companions.

"Now I call that a very nice young woman," observed Mrs. Darall. "Mr. Welby says she is always doing good to somebody, and that the parish would miss her, if she left it, a good deal more than it would the vicar himself."

"That's why he wants to make her the vicaress, I suppose, and so secure her to the parish," remarked Hugh, smiling.

"I daresay it is," answered the old lady. "He seems a very unselfish sort of a man; but, then, every young woman is not bound to fall in love even with a clergyman for parochial reasons, though she might have much worse. Do you know, my dear, I am rather sorry I didn't tell her you were engaged?"

"Good heavens, why?" enquired Hugh.

"Well, I think it was rather hard upon the vicar. He's not very good-looking and not very young; and the contrast between you and him, my dear, could not fail to have struck her. Did you not notice how silent and thoughtful she seemed to grow all of a sudden; and yet she could not keep her eyes off you? That is very significant, in my opinion. I am sorry I did not tell her—of course in some indirect and delicate way—that you were engaged."

"Perhaps I had better carry a board to that effect, like the advertisers in the streets," observed Hugh, dryly. "I daresay

we can get one with 'Engaged' upon it, at the railway station."

CHAPTER XLIII. THE RECOGNITION.

MRS. DARALL had been right enough in her diagnosis of Helen's case so far as ten symptoms were concerned; she had grown silent and thoughtful in Hugh's company, while her eyes had strayed in his direction in spite of herself; but the old lady's notion that all this was caused by love at first sight—that the girl had fallen a captive to her son's charms, was, to say the least of it, premature. Helen had scarcely bestowed a thought on Hugh, except so far as a possible connection between him and her brother-in-law, Henry Landon, was concerned; but that idea had been overwhelming. That the christian-name of two Mr. Landons should in each case be Cecil, was rather remarkable; that they should both have their head-quarters in town, though their business lay much in the country, made the coincidence stronger; and these two circumstances, taken together, would have been quite sufficient to make Helen uneasy in her mind.

From the first moment she had made acquaintance with Landon, she had, as we have seen, mistrusted him; but when, contrary to her expectation, he had returned to Grantham, and given reasons more or less plausible for his change of purpose, Helen had endeavoured to persuade herself that jealousy upon her sister's account—the apprehension lest he should break up their happy little home—had set her against him. His account of his material position had satisfied Mr. Welby and the family lawyer, and even Helen herself was obliged to confess that the man was earnestly in love with Rose; that that was no passing fancy on his side, which was repaid with such blind confidence and devotion on the other. Under such conditions it was impossible to oppose the young people's union, and in due time—for it had been by no means what could be called "in haste"—they had been married. The interval had been marked by conduct on his part that was somewhat singular. Considering the independence of Mr. Landon's pecuniary position—which had itself been effected, even according to his own account, with unusual suddenness—his movements seemed to depend very much on other people. From the day of his engagement, he had established himself at the Stranger's Rest, but he seemed liable to be called away from Grantham at

a moment's notice. Even Rose observed of him that he was always "flying south" like Mr. Tennyson's swallow; and "the south" was generally the extent of the information vouchsafed to her as to where he was going. He had replied with such marked emphasis on one occasion "Not Wellborough," when someone had enquired whether he was bound for that town, that it was understood he did not like being questioned as to whither business called him. It was not known, therefore, how often he went to London, though he certainly had been there once to get the special license by which he had insisted on being married. The vicar was greatly scandalised that this had not been done by banns in the usual manner, but so far Helen had agreed with Landon, since it had saved her sister the being stared at, during "publication," by three Sunday congregations.

For the rest, Helen could not deny that her new brother-in-law was a very agreeable young fellow, though, for special reasons, he had failed to make a pleasant impression upon herself. And here again was another source of uneasiness to her, in the account Mr. Darall had given of Landon's namesake. "He was the brightest and most agreeable, if not the cleverest fellow I ever knew," he had said; which would have been a fair account, in a friend's mouth, of Cecil himself. So far, and by itself, this might have been only another coincidence, albeit it was the third; but taken in connection with the sentence previously spoken by Mrs. Darall, "for at one time—that was when he was a cadet at Woolwich—the boy talked of nobody else," it had for Helen a terrible significance. Rose, who laid up in her memory every word her lover had spoken to her, even at their first meeting, had told her sister that he had been educated "with some intention of being an engineer;" he was certainly a judge of drawing—though not in a very artistic way—and had often given Helen herself the benefit of his advice, which had been considerable, respecting her own calling. Up to this date, Helen had always concluded that the profession he had thus hinted at was that of civil engineering; but those simple words, "when he was a cadet at Woolwich," had opened a new door for suspicion, and thrown down at once all the slender barriers of comfort and security, which she had striven to erect for herself as respected Rose. If Rose's husband, being, as he

confessedly was, Cecil Landon, had also been a cadet at Woolwich, he must almost certainly be identical with Mr. Darall's friend, who was a married man. Of course, it was possible that her brother-in-law had not been at Woolwich, but the bare notion of it, with its appalling consequences, had so overwhelmed her, that she had taken the first opportunity of leaving her two companions, with whom she felt utterly unable to converse any longer. Her call at the labourer's cottage—though she was a constant visitor in such places—was a mere pretext for getting home, and considering this momentous matter in all its bearings.

Of Mrs. Darall's coming to Grantham, Landon knew nothing; Hugh's appointment had not been conferred for some months after he had received the promise of it, and the Wold Cottage had not been taken by its new tenant until after Landon's wedding. Upon his return, therefore, he would unexpectedly meet his friend—if his friend he really were—face to face. The *éclaircissement*, if such there was to be, was immediately impending; and Helen, alone at The Casket, had now to contemplate it, with what courage she might now possess. Courage she had, and also a good store of common sense; but it is doubtful, with her passionate devotion for her sister, if even with these aids she could have faced the consequences of the impending catastrophe, had she not still entertained hopes that it would not take place. Her reason bade her prepare for the worst; but sentiment came to her relief. She could not bring herself quite to believe that any man could be so infamously wicked as this Landon must needs be, if her suspicions were indeed correct; above all, she could not think it possible, that one so good and innocent as her darling Rose could be permitted by Providence to be the victim of such an infernal scheme, as her imagination had conjured up. She would take counsel of no one; for what could be the use of counsel, if the thing she feared were true? And, if it were not true, how shocking was the imputation that she would thus have falsely made against the man whom her darling Rose loved above all men. If she told Mr. Welby for example—and she had her reasons for not making him more of a confidant than necessary—what a revelation it would be to him of her real feeling towards her brother-in-law, for which, after all, there might be no just

grounds! No; she must bear this burthen of suspense on her own shoulders, with only a little hope to prevent it from being intolerable.

Had she dared to pay her promised visit that afternoon to the Wold Cottage, she might, indeed, have put an end to her suspense. One or two questions addressed directly to this Mr. Darall concerning his friend would, she was well convinced, have settled the matter one way or the other. But she did not dare to put them, lest it should be settled the wrong way, and doubt be ended by despair—for if her fears were justified, Rose was ruined.

So that day and the next "dragged their slow length along," and then came Saturday, on which the bridal pair were to return. Her sister, knowing how lonely Helen would feel, had written to her oftener than young women on their honeymoons generally find time to write, and her letters had been full of happiness. In her heart, it was clear, no doubt had arisen of the man with whom she had elected to share her lot in life. She spoke of him with rapture; but deplored the devotion to business which seemed to prevent "dearest Henry" from thoroughly enjoying anything, through anxiety lest matters should go wrong in his absence. "And yet, as you know, ours is an exceptionally short tour; and even the hardest-worked of mortals—as I tell him—gets a holiday when he is married."

This information, written perhaps to "fill up" a sheet of note paper, now weighed like lead upon poor Helen's heart; for might not this "anxiety" be the worst of all anxieties—namely, that arising from the fear of detection? She thought it also suspicious that, notwithstanding the press of business thus hinted at, not a single letter had arrived at Grantham for her brother-in-law; to prevent which, he must either have taken unusual precautions, or informed no one of his whereabouts; indeed, the latter was almost certain, since the landlady of the Stranger's Rest had volunteered the statement that, "even when the gentleman was there, he never got no letters."

But when Rose came home at last, looking so happy and so beautiful, and her husband all smiles and pleasant talk, Helen almost forgot her fears. It could not, could not be, that he was a heartless villain, and that all her Rose's bliss was doomed to be destroyed, like a flower blighted by sudden frost. The vicar had angled for an invitation to meet the young

people on that first evening of their return; not that he really cared to do so, but was pining to see Miss Helen, to whom, being alone at The Casket, he had not been able to pay his court as usual; but she had steadfastly refused the bait. Mr. Welby would have been almost certain to relate among his budget of news, that Mrs. Darall and her son had taken up their quarters in the village, and Helen did not wish her brother-in-law to be informed of that circumstance. To be "forewarned" with him—supposing him to be guilty—would be to be "forearmed," and he would be sure to make some excuse for not meeting the new-comers. At church, next day, both parties would be present, and she resolved carefully to watch for any sign of mutual recognition.

Mrs. Darall had been so far correct with respect to the impression made by her son on Helen, that it was a favourable one. She had judged him rightly to be frank, manly, and unused to the arts of deception; and if Landon were indeed his old friend and schoolmate, she felt sure that she should read as much in Darall's face.

Never had the little church at Grantham held a larger congregation than on the Sunday after the return of the bridal pair. Everybody who was on visiting terms at The Casket had brought their congratulations with them for presentation after service; all the others came to express the same, as far as it could be done by staring. Even the vicar on his way to the reading-desk, with cast-down eyes and folded palms, as is the orthodox manner, stole a glance of welcome towards The Casket pew with its three occupants.

It did but just hold three. Landon on the outside, looking very pleased and proud; Rose next to him; and then Helen, her eyes fixed anxiously on the white-washed gallery opposite, in which were the two "sittings" that "went with" the Wold Cottage. Their tenants were a little late, through Mrs. Darall having insisted upon coming in pattens—articles in those days used commonly enough on muddy roads, to the advantage of the wearer as to cleanliness, but rather to her detriment in the way of speed. Darall looked in his hat for the usual half-minute, and then took a survey of the edifice, while the bassoon and other antediluvian instruments, which did duty for an organ in the humble sanctuary, gave forth their preli-

minary strains. Helen watched his eyes wander over the pulpit with its old-fashioned sounding-board; the Ten Commandments in the vulgar tongue that hung above her pew, with ten fire-buckets—like a commentary—below them; and then elsewhere, over the font, with the children of the village school sitting around it, and the schoolmaster with his long hazel wand, with which, throughout the service, he would flick the most distant of his refractory pupils, as a dextrous coachman "touches up" his leaders, or a skilful angler throws his fly. If Mrs. Darall had been given to staring about her in church, she would certainly have noticed how Helen's eyes followed her Hugh's, and drawn a wholly wrong conclusion. At last his roving glance is suddenly attracted—as a needle leaps to the loadstone and there sticks—to the bridegroom, who, unconscious of his scrutiny, is stroking his moustachios, and wondering whether the vicar will allude in his sermon to the marriage in Cana.

Helen sees incredulity, astonishment, horror, take each in turn their place upon Darall's countenance, which is henceforth fixed upon the other's, as a bird is fascinated by the serpent, albeit the serpent does not, as yet, look his way. He must needs do so, however, presently; and Helen now watches him solely. She will know well enough, by the expression in his face, when his recognition of Darall shall, in its turn, have taken place. Now the priest prays, and now the people, and now again all join together in praiseful harmony, but poor Helen can neither pray nor sing. Even when she kneels upon her hassock, her eyes shoot athwart her unconscious sister—thanking heaven, perhaps, at that very moment in her pure heart, for so good a husband—and are riveted on her brother-in-law. The thing happens at last, while the congregation are singing. Landon is weary, and has just covered his mouth to hide a yawn; this is fortunate, for, as his glance wanders to the gallery, his jaw drops as though he were a dead man. For one instant, his eyes strive to start out of his head, and then are turned upon his book. His face is as white as the face of the dead. "God help us!" murmurs Helen, with a devotion that not all the concentrated piety of the congregation could have approached; "God help us, for this is indeed the man!"

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